

## Message Text

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21

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /056 W

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R 110833Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 150

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASIL CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 3234

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MY

SUBJ: MEETING ON SABAH SECESSION

REF: A. KUALA LUMPUR 2866 B. KUALA LUMPUR 2707; C. KUALA LUMPUR

2432

1. REPORTS OF TUN MUSTAPHA'S MEETING WITH FORMER PRIME MINISTER TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN IN LATE APRIL ARE BEGINNING TO FILTER INTO PUBLIC DOMAIN. RELIABLE K.L. PRESS SOURCE SAID TUNKU, ON OSTENSIBLY PRIVATE VISIT TO SABAH AS HEAD OF MUSLIM MISSIONARY AND WELFARE ORGANIZATION (PERKIM), CONFRONTED MUSTAPHA ON REFERENCE TO SABAH SECESSION MADE IN SPEECHES DURING STATE-WIDE TOUR (REF C).

2. TUNKU, ACCORDING THIS REPORT, WAS JOINED BY SARAWAK CHIEF MINISTER RAHMAN YA'KUB IN MEETING WITH MUSTAPHA AND LEADING SABAHANS, INCLUDING FEDERAL DEPUTY DEFENSE MIN DZULKIFLI HAMID AND WORKS AND POWER MIN GHANI GILONG. MEETING REPORTEDLY OPENED WITH HOUR-AND-QUARTER STATEMENT BY TUNKU  
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DENOUNCING SECESSION TALK, SAYING THAT "NO SECESSION"

PRINCIPLE ESTABLISHED IN 1965 (I.E., IT WAS OK IF WE EXPELLED SINGAPORE FROM THE FEDERATION, BUT VOLUNTARY DEPARTURES ARE NOT ALLOWED). TUNKU ALSO MADE IMPASSIONED PLEA AS "BAPAK MALAYSIA" ("FATHER OF MALAYSIA") NOT TO BREAK UP FEDERATION WHICH, HE AVERRED, SABAH AND SARAWAK JOINED BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT EXIST ON THEIR OWN. TUNKU THEREUPON STALKED OUT OF MEETING AND DISCUSSION CONTINUED ON DESULTORY FASHION BECAUSE, ACCORDING TO SOURCE, SABAHANS BELIEVED RAYSAN YA'KUB TO BE "TROJAN HORSE" FOR FEDERAL GOVT AND THEY DID NOT WISH TO COMMIT THEMSELVES IN HIS PRESENCE.

3. ANOTHER REPORT FROM WESTERN BUSINESS SOURCE WITH GOOD CONTACTS IN KOTA KINABALU SAID MUSTAPHA HAS PUT TWO YEAR TIME LIMIT ON DECISION REGARDING SABAH'S CONTINUATION IN FEDERATION. MUSTAPHA, IN MEETING REPORTED ABOVE, ALLEGEDLY SAID THAT SABAH DID NOT WISH TO BE DISRUPTIVE IN VIEW OF UNSETTLING POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, BUT WOULD AGREE TO STAY IN FEDERATION TWO MORE YEARS AFTER WHICH STATE WOULD RE-EVALUATE ASSOCIATION IN LIGHT OF ITS OWN INTERESTS. ALSO, MUSTAPHA INSISTED THAT STATE (AND HE PERSONALLY AS CHIEF MINISTER) SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO RETAIN ALL POWERS GIVEN UNDER 1963 FEDERATION AGREEMENT, PRINCIPALLY CONTROL OF IMMIGRATION, LOCAL FINANCES AND INTERNAL SECURITY.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THESE REPORTS ARE FRAGMENTARY, THEY INDICATE RISING INTEREST -- AND CONCERN IN GOVT CIRCLES -- IN SABAH'S SOMEWHAT FRAGILE CONNECTION WITH KUALA LUMPUR. MAJORITY OPINION HERE STILL HOLDS THAT COMPLETE SABAH BREAKAWAY (OR MERGER WITH SARAWAK AND PERHAPS BRUNEI INTO INDEPENDENT NORTH BORNEO CONFEDERATION) IS UNLIKELY AND MUSTAPH'S CURRENT CONTRETEMPS IS A BID FOR MORE AUTONOMY AND LESS FEDERAL INTERFERENCE IN STATE AFFAIRS. WE ARE INCLINED TO AGREE WITH THIS ASSESSMENT (SEE ALSO REF B). CENTRAL GOVT IN ITS DEALINGS WITH MUSTAPHA IS NOT LIKELY TO PRESS SO HARD AS TO PRECIPITATE AN OPEN PLIT IN THE FEDERATION.  
UNDERHILL

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## Message Attributes

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